



The Virginia Saltwater Review

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by

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OVERVIEW



Happy Labor Day Weekend! The unofficial end to the summer of 2008. It has been a summer filled with rollercoaster gas prices (mostly going up, sometimes sliding down), odd weather (keep watching TS Hannah), and late-coming fish arrivals. However, there have also been some record-breaking fish.

As summer starts to exit, anglers are looking forward to the start of the fall fishing season in Virginia. This week, cobia have been a frequent topic, and these fighters are biting in several areas. York Spit and Bluefish Rock are the current hot spots for cobia; something Mr. Willy Winter, age 8, can attest to (see picture). Along with the cobia landed by his father and sister, he landed this hefty fish from the York Spit area. Sight casting works well, and chumming has produced some impressive catches as well.

The offshore tuna run seems to be about over. Anglers are catching a few dolphin and wahoo, but it looks as though the tuna have moved on. Local fishermen are expecting the swordfish action to pick up soon.

Remember, whether driving a boat or a vehicle, friends don't let friends drive drunk, so let's be safe out there and enjoy your holiday weekend!

THE FISHING REPORT

Chincoteague

According to Donna at Captain Bob's, while fishing has slowed in the area, anglers can still find croaker.

Those seeking safe harbor from the winds by moving to the Assateague Channel were rewarded with flounder. Offshore, the run seems to be over; however, last week at the wrecks, nice-sized flounder and a few spadefish were landed.

Wachapreague

At the Wachapreague Marina, numerous dolphin and several wahoo (one was 68 pounds) were taken this week. A few billfish were landed as well, but no tuna were biting. Inshore, flounder were still hanging on with a few keepers, and croaker began to pick up. Spot are showing, but anglers were left looking for trout. A few sand mullet were caught outside of the inlet in the surf this week.

Really great weekend fishing was reported from Captain Zeds. Rental boats had great success with croaker and flounder. Although there were plenty of throwbacks, Drawing Channel, Green Channel, and the area across from the Coast Guard Station were all very productive. Cedar Island Cove around Marker 4 and Bradford Channel were hot spots for croaker. For kingfish, the point of the beach at Cedar Island was the spot. Dolphin were landed offshore this week, but tuna were scarce.

Cape Charles

One citation flounder (7 pounds, 6 ounces) was reported this week from Chris' Bait and Tackle. Anglers had success with croaker near Oyster when the weather cooperated. Flounder were productive at 36A and the high-rise portion of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. A few red drum have been hooked between Smith and Fisherman's Islands.

Onancock

According to Captain Wil of Onancock, a few more keeper flounder were around this week than weeks past. Speckled trout fishing is picking up along the islands from Saxis to Pungoteague in the marshes and the creeks. Anglers are sight casting and using peelers for these fish. A few puppy drum (juvenile red drum) are showing along with striped bass. Croaker have been nice-sized. Plenty of small bluefish were around, and numerous small Spanish mackerel were jumping in the creek. Some are in the one- to two-pound range.

Lower Bay/Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel

At Cobb's Marina, a citation flounder was reported from the 4th island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. There was very little reported action this week. Anglers leaving the marina were targeting flounder.

According to staff at Sunset Boating Center, flounder were found at the Hampton Bar this week, and croaker were caught at the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel. No citations were reported.

At the York River Fishing Center, productive spot fishing was reported in the York River. Spot were also reported from the Rappahannock River. Anglers have found a few keeper flounder mixed in with numerous throwbacks. A 7-pound, 2-ounce flounder was hooked at Cape Charles this week.

Ken Neill, reporting secretary for the Peninsula Anglers Club, contributed the following:

Three blue marlin and a sailfish were caught at the Virginia Beach Billfish Tournament last week.

The 67 boats who fished found a good number of white marlin though—92 white marlin were caught. The best locations were east of the Cigar in 50 to 100 fathoms and just north of the Washington Canyon. Anglers fishing the Norfolk Canyon early and late in the day have encountered wolf packs of bigeye tuna. Yellowfin tuna remain a rare catch. Dolphin fishing remains very good, and wahoo are becoming a more common catch. Swordfish are being caught both to our north and south. Boats overnighing out of Virginia should see an increase in swordfish catches here. Offshore bottom fishing remains good for tilefish, grouper, and various strange creatures. The offshore wrecks are holding good numbers of large sea bass. Triggerfish and spadefish can be found on coastal wrecks like the Santore, Tiger, and the 4A Drydock. Amberjack and some crevalle jacks can be found at these same locations and at the Chesapeake Light Tower. The South Tower is still holding hordes of amberjack. Both towers are holding barracuda. Along the oceanfront, some large king mackerel are being caught. Plenty of Spanish mackerel are also being caught along the oceanfront and throughout the lower bay. Cobia fishing, both chumming and sight fishing has really turned on. They seem to be everywhere. Bluefish Rock and York Spit have both been productive for chumming. Sight fishing has been good in the lower bay and along the oceanfront all the way down to Oregon Inlet. Sight casting to schools of red or black drum are a possibility if you are lucky enough to run into them. Trophy flounder fishing is at its seasonal peak. Live bait fished around the structure of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, the Cape Henry Wreck, Back River Reef, and the Cell is the ticket.

Dr. Julie Ball, IGFA International Representative for Virginia Beach, contributed the following:

The Labor Day weekend marks the end of summer fun for lots of folks, but not if you are an angler on the Mid Atlantic coast! The summer species are preparing to migrate out of the area, and the fall residents are making their debut, so choosing which fish to target can be tough. Most are choosing cobia and flounder as they both group in the lower bay, making very easy targets. As soon as the winds subside, expect this trend to be back on track.

Cobia is a sure deal as they crowd along bridge pilings and lower bay buoys. Pods of fish are also appearing on the surface as they exit bay waters. Flounder is also a good bet as anglers continue to entice big flatfish from deep channels, and lower bay structures. The High Rise, the bend at the 3rd island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel (CBBT), and the Buoy 42/Cell area are producing big fish lately. If you prefer not to fight the crowds, decent flatfish are hitting drifted strips of cut bait over offshore wrecks. Nice sea bass are also providing good action on many offshore structures. Keeper spot are showing within lower bay inlets, and scattered around the lower bay. The best hauls are coming from Rudee Inlet lately. This action will only improve over the next few weeks. Croaker are hitting near the four islands of the CBBT, as well as in Oyster near the #1 buoy in about 35 feet of water.

Speckled trout and puppy drum (juvenile red drum) are becoming more active in the shallows. The best locations are Lynnhaven and Rudee Inlets, the Poquoson flats, and Hungar's Creek. Backwater casters are reporting good numbers of nice sized pups up to 30-inches.

Triggerfish are gaining even more momentum, while diehard sheepshead anglers are sneaking by with a few scattered catches. Triggerfish are hitting fiddlers and squid dangled along the structure of the CBBT. Bull red drum are still roaming the lower bay shoals, as well as the 3rd and 4th islands of the CBBT. Also look for red drum schooling off the Virginia Beach ocean front. It's almost time for the

much anticipated debut of the bull reds off the Sandbridge fishing pier. Black drum action is slowing around the islands of the CBBT as they prepare to migrate out of the bay.

Along the ocean front, anglers are scoring with some decent king mackerel from Cape Henry down to False Cape. Spanish mackerel are still providing limits of good sized fish in these same areas. Surf and pier action will escalate this month with decent hauls spot, croaker, taylor blues, puppy drum, pompano, and flounder.

Tarpon action slowed a little this week with the easterly winds, but Art Greason of Virginia Beach experienced the catch of a lifetime when he landed a tarpon on a fly while fishing in Oyster.

Virginia deep droppers are busy lately with three new pending all-tackle world record submissions within one week. Ron Van Kirk of Williamsburg submitted an odd catch, a huge Darwin's Slimehead he caught in the deep. Jere Humphries of Norfolk submitted a pending 68-pound snowy grouper from the same area, and Marcus Jones III of Elizabeth City, NC submitted an application for a nice barrelfish all-tackle world record. Amberjack are still available at the South tower and offshore wrecks, and jack crevelle catches should become more common within the next few weeks. Most offshore reports are nil since most boats are docked due to the recent winds. But once the winds subside, billfish action should pick back up. Dolphin catches are very good, with limits of bailer and gaffer mahi keeping trollers content. A possible wahoo is a good consolation prize. Scattered bigeye tuna are around, and yellowfin tuna are hit and miss, but the yellowfin action is good off Carolina right now.

Virginia Middle Bay

Before the east wind set in this week, the fishing had been excellent. All of the local bait shops and marinas indicated that there was a good bite on by several of the typical summer denizens. Bluefish and Spanish mackerel were being caught by people trolling, just look for the birds working the waters surface and there was a school of one or the other chopping up bait. Just remember: a faster troll for Spanish mackerel and slower for bluefish. In addition, the spot bite has been getting stronger with large spot now outnumbering the smaller ones by a good margin. No yellow bellies yet, but there are good pan sized fish for those with blood worms. In addition, there were some grey trout in the rivers and flounder working around the jetties.

Capt. Jim Thompson reports the past week was a carbon copy of the previous week. The fishing was good if you used fresh bloodworms and bad if you did not. The greatest catches were off Gwynn Island in 24 to 28 feet of water. Spot, croaker, shark, and mullet were present. If you drifted, flounder was possible, but a lot were under sized. Bluefish were everywhere and easy to catch. On Monday, however, the mouth of the Rappahannock River erupted with spot. The places to be were above the White Stone Bridge, number 8 at Mosquito Point, Butlers Hole, and the Spike. Spanish mackerel were still off Windmill Point as well as blues if you desire to troll for them. Last Saturday, a cobia was caught at the Spike. The week was a winner all in all. Just a note, when you start catching oyster toads move on as the fish have usually left the area.

Jerry Thrash, of Queen's Creek Outfitters, contributed the following:

Several cobia were brought in this week from the Winter family. They had success at the York Spit

using live spot. Pan-sized keeper grey trout made a showing in the Piankatank biting on bloodworms. Spanish mackerel were still available in lower Fleets Bay and along the drop off at Windmill Bar. Numerous of bluefish were available in the same areas. The Spanish mackerel will likely disappear with the first major weather system. Good-size spot continue to be caught at Cherry Point, off Gwynn Island, at the Spike (#3 Rappahannock marker), and at Butlers Hole. White perch, a few grey trout, and croaker were mixed in. Small speckled trout and puppy drum (juvenile red drum) can be caught in the creeks and from docks along with spot and croaker. The croaker will also be departing soon. Not much news on flounder fishing this week, but one citation fish was caught by the jigging method described last week.

Virginia Beach

Staff at the Virginia Beach Fishing Center reports good dolphin fishing, with up to 50 caught in a single day. Marlin are also producing some decent fishing. Spot and flounder are being caught in the Inlet, with the keeper ratio for the flounder at about 50%. A nice-size flounder weighing in at 12 pounds, 1 ounce was caught over the weekend.

Paula at Fisherman's Wharf Marina has seen an increase in winds over the last couple days, but not before the end of The Virginia Beach Bill Fish Tournament. Approximately 96 fish were landed in the northern area, as well as the Cigar area. Marlin fishing is also picking up.

Virginia Piers

Staff at the Ocean View Pier is seeing slow days of fishing, but the nights are full of action. Croaker, spot, and puppy drum (juvenile red drum) are the catches of the night.

Lynnhaven Pier's staff reports good catches of spot and croaker, and an increase in the puppy drum (juvenile red drum) action. Flounder are still being caught, though most are undersized.

The Virginia Beach Pier has been struggling with seaweed, but anglers are still bringing in good catches of spot, Spanish mackerel, and sea mullet. A few puppy drum (juvenile red drum) are being caught, as well as some small flounder.

Outer Banks, NC

Water temperatures continue to be warm, upper 70's to lower 80's, and the fishing is even hotter. The only damper on the horizon for people wanting to get their lines wet will be the chance that the remnants of Fay will be dropping some wet stuff on the area.

Offshore fishing out of Nags Head is still going strong for everything except tuna. Dolphin, amberjack, billfish, and wahoo were going strong for the trollers, and tilefish, sea bass, triggerfish and snapper were keeping the bottom droppers happy. Mid-range fishing slowed down some from last week with striped bass and sheepshead being the notable exception to this trend. Close to shore, Spanish mackerel and bluefish were keeping the people trolling metal spoons busy. Pier and surf fishermen were having a good time with the Spanish mackerel and bluefish as well. Other species of note include spadefish, spot, pigfish, and

croaker. Cobia could also be found for those working live bait off the ends of the piers.

South of Oregon Inlet, the fishing was good when the wind let the chunkers get their bait outside the breakers. Bluefish and sea mullet could be had with cut bait and sand fleas. People using bloodworms were able to find spot and sea mullet. The pluggers had to bide their time, but when the wind let up, they could catch Spanish mackerel and bluefish at the Point. People who were working the sound side had luck with puppy drum and speckled trout.

People fishing out of Hatteras Inlet did well offshore catching dolphin, with scattered wahoo. Offshore, bottom fishing produced snappers and sea bass. Inside the sounds, bluefish could be found by following the birds. Flounder were available for people drifting cut bait and people plugging the normal haunts for puppy drum and speckled trout were rewarded as well.

If you have additional information or would like further details contact Joe Grist at (757) 247-2237. Please credit the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's THE SALTWATER REVIEW as the source of the fishing information.

Get Hooked!

Report at www.vasaltwaterjournal.com



The Virginia Marine Resources Commission wants to know about the saltwater fish you caught and if you threw it back or took it home for dinner. How big was it? What species was it? Where did you catch it? This self-reported catch-and-release information will be posted on-line, giving the recreational angler a broader picture of what everyone else is catching -- and where.

The Fisherman's Journal is a tool intended to benefit the individual angler, the fishing community, and fishery managers. It allows individual anglers to keep an easy-to-retrieve record of their successful fishing experiences. It allows the fishing community to share and learn about other anglers' experiences. Finally, it benefits fishery managers by allowing them to assess fish populations by analyzing data provided by you, the recreational fisherman.

Virginia Marine Resources Commission
Recreational Fishing Online Reporting

Virginia Recreational ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Recreational Saltwater Fishing
Welcome Jgrist,

Red Drum Reports are Needed!

We are collecting length data from red drum that anglers catch-and-release. In 2009, there will be a coastwide (Virginia to Florida) stock assessment of the red drum population, and information is lacking on the catch-and-release of red drum outside of the management slot limit (18 to 26 inches).

New 2008 Tautog Regs

Closed Season	May 1 through June 24
Minimum Size Limit	14 inches
Possession Limit	4 per person

June 16, 2008
Members: 1,457
Trips: 295
Catches: 3,941

You will be able to report catch-and-release ranges, in addition to individual fish kept or released.

On those days that you catch-and-release 50 bluefish, you can just report the number caught and a range of lengths. Reporting individual measurements on more highly prized species -- such as Red Drum, Striped Bass and Flounder -- provides a greater benefit for everyone.

Anglers also may report their fishing trip information, including general location, time of day, weather and water conditions and type of gear and bait used. This information could be extremely valuable to other anglers to give them an idea of what is caught, where it is caught, and what bait is working on what species.

This self-reporting program will help anglers to become more successful and will provide fishery managers with important anecdotal information on recreational catches. The voluntary on-line reporting system is called the "Saltwater Fisherman's Journal," and is found at www.vasaltwaterjournal.com.

ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS












THE VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION

***WANTS YOUR FISH....
TO MEASURE AND AGE.***

You catch it, you fillet it,

**but instead of throwing the remains in the trash,
please donate them to science.**

The Marine Sportfish Collection Project will focus on species of fish that are difficult to collect through the agency's normal sampling program. Anglers are asked to donate their filleted carcasses (head and tail intact) of legal and fresh-caught:

COBIA		RED DRUM	
SHEEPSHEAD		BLACK DRUM	
SPADEFISH		TAUTOG	
TILEFISH		GROUPE	
KING MACKEREL		SPANISH MACKEREL	
BLUEFISH (OVER 16 POUNDS OR 36 INCHES)			

**In return for participating in the project, the agency will provide a
ONE FREE PROJECT TEE SHIRT or HAT, FOR EACH PARTICIPANT,
PER MONTH of the DONATION.**

Please visit these bait and tackle merchants to participate:

**Bell Isle Marine (Hampton) Chris' Bait and Tackle (Capeville)
Long Bay Pointe Marina (Virginia Beach) Wachapreague Marina
Wallace's Bait and Tackle (Hampton)**

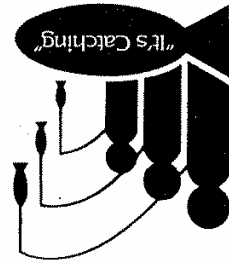
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Website: http://mrc.virginia.gov/rec_assessment/index.shtm



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Practice

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